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GETTING RELEVANT:  
POLITICAL EDUCATION AND MILITARY ETHICS

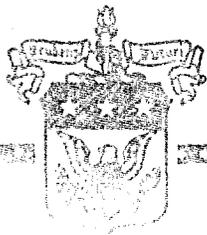
BY

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# USAWC MILITARY STUDIES PROGRAM PAPER

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## GETTING RELEVANT: POLITICAL EDUCATION AND MILITARY ETHICS

An Individual Study Project

by

Colonel Richard L. Sutter, CA

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Project Advisor



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U. S. Army War College  
Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania 17013  
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# ABSTRACT

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This study opens with the proposition that students attending the U. S. Army War College (USAWC) have not accepted that institution's curricular theme -- the conjoining of political and military perspectives at the senior level of military leadership. This rejection is traced to the American "tradition of antimilitarism" and its source in the writings of the Antifederalist opponents of the Constitution of 1787. The views of both Antifederalists and Federalists are contrasted as revolutionary zeal and sober reflection. Despite the adoption of the Constitution, the Antifederalist doctrine of hostility to a standing army survived the intervening two centuries as a respectable opinion and found popular proponents. This opinion shaped the public interpretation of the paradigmatic event of modern U. S. civil-military relations: the Truman-MacArthur controversy. Since World War II, respected authorities of academia, civil government, and the U. S. military have espoused a preference for the isolation of the military from political matters and this preference has informed the current generation of U. S. military officers. General Eisenhower's wise dissent from this trend is not widely heeded. The essay concludes with a call for the introduction of instruction on civil-military relations within the USAWC curriculum which will revive the great tradition of the American warrior-statesman and which will inculcate an ethic in the student body supportive of our Constitutional heritage and the purposes of the USAWC as the prerequisite of its pedagogical success.

## Table of Contents

	Page
ABSTRACT . . . . .	ii
CHAPTER I. A Heritage of Suspicion . . . . .	1
II. Antifederalism: Alive and Well . . . . .	7
III. The Ethic of Professional Isolation . . . . .	16
IV. The Partisan Exclusion . . . . .	28
V. An Education for Relevance . . . . .	38
BIBLIOGRAPHY . . . . .	43

To the memory of  
First Lieutenant John W. Irving, Jr.

**Among the faithless, faithful only he.**

John Milton  
*Paradise Lost*

# **GETTING RELEVANT:**

## **POLITICAL EDUCATION AND MILITARY ETHICS**

**Now the general is the protector of the state. If this protection is all-embracing, the state will surely be strong; if defective, the state will surely be weak.**

**Sun Tzu**  
*The Art of War* 1

### **Chapter I**

#### **A Heritage of Suspicion**

If there is a theme which binds together the wide-ranging elements of the U. S. Army War College (USAWC) curriculum, it is the precept that the art of war is tied inextricably to the art of governance. This insight is the source, it may be presumed, of the oft-stated objective of that institution to prepare the Army's future senior leaders to pursue their profession in the larger, more complex, ambiguous, and contentious environment of domestic politics and international affairs. Despite an instructional effort which in terms of sheer physical and intellectual resources is surpassing, the effort may be falling in a critical respect. There are troubling signs that the current USAWC student body is not

"buying" its guiding thematic precept and is not enamored of the effort to link its profession to politics. To describe this apparent disaffection, to consider its causes, and to speculate on its implications for the education of future senior military leaders are the principal purposes of this essay.

The concern which led me to the preceding observations is not based on polling data. It was gestated in personal observation and born in a hunch. The intuitional conclusions which I have reached are, however, not arbitrary. They are grounded in long experience as an educator, as a student and teacher of politics, as an Army officer schooled and practiced in political-military affairs, and as one who must regularly cross the sometimes vague line which divides the military and the civilian perspectives on problems of national security. Not least, my conclusions have been informed by several months of close observation of the Class of 1988 as one of their number.

The particular events which seem to justify my concern are not in themselves particularly dramatic, but they form a pattern: alienation from our political institutions and processes; contempt for those segments of our society engaged in the shaping or service of public opinion; an infatuation with visions of absolute war; and the disparagement of an organic or philosophical approach to military affairs -- extending even to good-humored, but persistent contumely aimed at the modest statuary of von Clausewitz in Root Hall.

Others have noted these attitudes among the students. Two explanations for them are common among the USAWC faculty,

Judging from what is said both in and out of the classroom. The first is that these officers have, for the most part, just emerged from the microcosm of battalion-level command and have a narrow perspective in consequence of a technical and/or tactical professional orientation. This viewpoint sees the priority of the USAWC effort being aimed at the sophistication of the students. The second explanation is that this generation of officers was emotionally scarred by the experience of defeat in Vietnam and the social travails of the Army during the 1970's. This view sees the primary effort of the USAWC going to morale building and the inculcation of professionalism.

Both of these explanations seemed to me compelling enough on the surface, and holding elements of truth, but I was not quite convinced. I knew these men pretty well. I knew that in terms of breadth of professional responsibility, openness of attitude, sharpness of wit, and seriousness of commitment, they represented a spirited and competent professional body which compares very favorably with any segment of our society with which I am familiar. Many had advanced university degrees and most had impressive international travel experience, rendering them far more sophisticated as a group than any general slice of our society. I knew that many of them felt a personal pain and sorrow in their private thoughts on a lost war, but I saw little evidence that these feelings had been translated into concrete perspectives on matters of civil-military relations.

My growing feeling that something deeper and more permanent lay behind the apparent rift between the attitude of the students and the intention of the USAWC curriculum was

crystallized after hearing a number of key senior military leaders address the Class of 1988 in Bliss Hall. The experienced speaker establishes rapport with his audience at the outset of his speech. A variety of tactics may be employed to this end. It was of particular interest to note, therefore, that, with the rarest exception, visiting flag officers have consistently spoken disparagingly of "politics" in some way to break the proverbial "ice" as they launched into what usually turned out to be a heavily political subject. The "Boy, am I glad to be in Carlisle because it gets me out of Washington" introduction has become a cliché, but it is a ploy that seems to work. The sought-after rapport is established in a response of nervous laughter. The sentiment on which the toleration of the audience for the message of the speaker is based remains as a kind of frame for his remarks. That sentiment speaks of the alienation of the military profession from the art of governance and its preference for professional isolation. The subtle process of communication which is contained within but few words seems to escape the opprobrium which it deserves because it is camouflaged in humor and joviality. I contend that the lesson it teaches is at once more effective and more respectable than that contained in the USAWC curriculum. It is also a message which is dangerous to our national security effort and which undermines our national strength from within. That these effects are unintended goes, of course, without saying; but that fact should give us no comfort.

It was in this context that a particular excerpt from one of the USAWC issued texts came to mind and took on a new meaning. According to Donald M. Snow:

A suspicion of the military and of military solutions to problems is as old as the Republic, and is a major legacy of the Anglo-Saxon heritage. From the time the United States was founded, a standing, professional military has been looked on with suspicion and even disdain, as something not entirely to be trusted or respected.

Antimilitarism has manifested itself in a couple of ways. One response . . . has been to keep [the armed forces] small as possible during peacetime. . . . Moreover, [they were] kept physically isolated.

A second way. . . was to make the professional military . . . as non-political. . . as possible. To this end, the professional military establishment, and especially its officer corps, has been strictly separated from the political arena.<sup>2</sup>

Could Snow be correct in asserting that an aspect of the ethical heritage of our society is the social and political isolation of the profession of arms? If correct, what precisely is the nature and authority of that "heritage" and how ought it to be understood in relation to the USAWC curricular objectives? The question also posed itself this way: Is the importation of notions among our military leaders which contradict that "heritage" an unethical act, or is it somehow justified in spite of a tradition of antimilitarism?

Looking back in American history for answers to questions on matters of social ethics means, primarily, turning to the period of our founding as a nation in the cauldron of revolution. This is not to say that our national heritage does not reach back into the ancient past, nor to claim that it is not rooted in ideas and events which originated beyond our continental borders. It is to claim, however, that the American Revolution opened for examination and ultimately transformed the received heritage of previous ages and other lands. The American Revolution raised the perennial

questions of politics and moral philosophy in a unique way, and provided authoritative answers which have informed our national perspective and the fundamental ethical framework within which subordinate issues are interpreted and resolved in public debate and in law. The most significant of these authoritative answers, from the perspective of military conduct and responsibility, must surely be the Constitution itself.

### Endnotes

1. Sun Tzu, *The Art of War*, Translated by Samuel B. Griffith. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963, p. 81.

2. Donald M. Snow, *National Security: Enduring Problems of U. S. Defense Policy*, New York: St. Martin's Press, 1987, p. 26.

## Chapter II

### Antifederalism: Alive and Well

The Constitution was written in a few short weeks in Philadelphia in the summer of 1787. Its formal preparation was, however, based on a general consensus which had been forming in the minds of the framers over many years. This consensus drew heavily on historical precedent and recent experience, tested in the fire of a public debate on the future of the American regime which had been raging since even before the Declaration of Independence was signed. This debate had many dimensions and encompassed many perspectives, the description of which exceeds the scope of our present interest. It may suffice to say, however, that these many views became classified into two camps during the process of ratification of the Constitution of 1787; for the text of that venerated document and the equally venerated published exegeses of its principal authors forced public men to decide how they would stand on the fundamental questions of America's political future. On one side -- that of the new Constitution -- stood the Federalists. On the other, lacking any historical term of unity of their own, stood the Antifederalists.

The Federalist position was clear. The nation was in need of a political consolidation of the independence and liberties it had won on the field of battle. The mechanisms and opinions which supported the weak framework of the Articles of Confederation

would not do; for they left the nation bereft of the means to secure its achievements in a dangerous world of designing foreign powers and incapable of focussing its resources and efforts on the improvement of its national economy. The great danger, as perceived by the supporters of the new Constitution, was the loss of the independence of the new American nation. The division of the North American continent into economically, politically, and militarily incompetent units, each contesting with its equally weak neighbors for prosperity and survival, would inevitably result in a renewed European influence in the development of those units as they sought outside support to bolster their economies or their relative political and military power. Indeed, this tactic had been resorted to during the Revolutionary War in the rebel combination with France.

The Antifederalists, in contrast, feared foreign influence or force less than the domestic threat of military despotism. This line of attack had two elements: a likening of the motives of the supporters of the Constitution -- men like James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and George Washington -- to the ambitions of Julius Caesar, a general who overthrew a republic and erected in its place an empire. The second line of attack was against the "standing army," regarding it as an essential tool of this caesarian ambition, the effectual means of overthrowing the state by force or by intimidation.

On the side of the Antifederalists, however, high-sounding rhetoric too often masked a desire to retain local political and business advantages deemed to be threatened by a competent central government with the power to tax, regulate, and

adjudicate for the common welfare and for the common defense. In their best moments, the Antifederalists met the Federalists on the ground of principled debate. They occasionally achieved eloquence on that ground, and in *those* instances, were an indispensable factor in establishing an effective airing of public opinion on the momentous issues of the day. On the subject of the war power, however, rational dispute gave way to denunciation and suspicion. Replying directly to Hamilton's published views on defense, a prolific Antifederalist writer, Samuel B. Harding, writing under the pseudonym, "Brutus," puts the issue of war powers beyond reasoned debate by linking the subject to motives of treasonable conspiracy:

The liberties of the people are in danger from a large standing army, not only because the rulers may employ them for the purposes of supporting themselves in any usurpations of power. . . . but there is a great hazard, that an army will subvert the forms of the government, under whose authority they are raised, and establish [a regime] according to the pleasure of their leaders.

. . . the evils to be feared from a large standing army in time of peace, do not arise solely from the apprehension, that the rulers may employ them for the purpose of promoting their own ambitious views; but that equal, and perhaps greater danger, is to be apprehended from their overturning the constitutional powers of the government, and assuming the power to dictate any form they please.<sup>1</sup>

"Brutus" and his fellow Antifederalist writers find the source of this "greater danger" of internal subversion and institutional revolution locked in the recesses of the souls of antirepublican men at large in the new republican social and political experiment -- souls which are motivated by a passion for personal glory and nurtured by the warrior-king traditions of Europe:

The European governments are almost all framed, and administered with a view to arms, and war, as that in which their chief glory consists. They mistake the end of government. It was designed to save men's lives, not destroy them. We ought to furnish the world with an example of a great people, who in their civil institutions hold chiefly in view, the attainment of virtue, and happiness among ourselves. . . . The most important end of government, then, is the proper direction of its internal police, and economy; this is the province of the state governments. . . . 2

To counter the Federalist complaint that the Antifederalists had no proper concern for the national defense, they were prone to present a novel notion of the source of an adequate defense befitting a republic:

. . . . It is asserted by the most respectable writers upon government that a well-regulated militia, composed of the yeomanry of the country, have ever been considered as the bulwark of a free people.<sup>3</sup>

. . . . I need only adduce the example of Switzerland which, like us, is a republic, whose thirteen cantons, like our thirteen states, are under a federal government, and which besides is surrounded by the most powerful nations in Europe, all jealous of its liberty and prosperity. And yet that nation has preserved its freedom for many ages, with the sole help of a militia, and has never been known to have a standing army, *except when in actual war.* [emphasis added.] 4

To be clear, the issue between these gentlemen of our founding generation was not a question of warmonger versus pacifist. Indeed, while the Antifederalists did not appreciate the need for military expertise and military experience, they espoused a warlike spirit. They held that the normal experience of political life in a republican regime, internal police and economic activity,

was a unique and powerful source of military effectiveness. The republican social and economic order, they claimed, required only a militia, formations of armed civilians who, jealous of their rights, will readily enough put off their civilian demeanor, take up arms, and fight with a resolve which will, by moral force and individual energy alone, overwhelm the hirelings of any invading tyrant. In such a society, the war spirit is not within the leaders, it rests deeply within the people, waiting to be released "in time of actual war." It is a vision which turns the Antifederalist picture of European history on its head: a peacemaking leadership, guided by a desire to save men's lives, and an easily enraged citizenry with a proclivity for war nurtured in the context of their everyday experience of citizenship.

The Federalist answer to this novel vision of the unique nature of the American political and social experiment is a lesson in prudence and a firm stand against the Antifederalist view of the malleability of human nature and circumstance. The essence of that response is that whatever may be unique in the particular history of the American Republic, that history culminates in the establishment of political institutions which are subject to the same laws of human nature and worked upon by the same forces of habit, reason, folly, vice, and virtue as have shaped and guided the destinies of all previous popular regimes. In the realm of military thinking, the Federalists held that an untrained militia, however well motivated it might be, is no substitute for a professional force:

The authorities essential to the common defense are these: to raise armies; to build and equip fleets; to prescribe rules for the government of both; to direct their operations; to provide for their support. These

powers ought to exist without limitation because it is impossible to foresee or define the extent and variety of national exigencies, or the correspondent extent and variety of the means which may be necessary to satisfy them.

The circumstances that endanger the safety of nations are infinite. . . This power [of national defense] ought to be coextensive with all the possible combinations of such circumstances. . .

This is one of those truths which, carries its own evidence along with it. . . It rests upon axioms as simple as they are universal; the *means* ought to be proportioned to the *end*. . . 5

If. . . it should be resolved to extend the prohibition [against a standing army] to the raising of armies in time of peace, the United States would then exhibit the most extraordinary spectacle the world has yet seen -- that of a nation incapacitated by its Constitution to prepare for defence. . . *All that kind of policy by which nations anticipate distant danger and meet the gathering storm, must be abstained from.* . . [emphasis added] 6

In the contest for national survival, a standing army is essential not only with respect to the need for a trained and organized force, but also to "prepare for defence" and to "anticipate distant danger" by the making of a certain kind of "policy." *The Federalist* is written in various hands, but with a single, unifying sense of the need to guard against the tendency common to popular revolutions to think that the new regimes they produce are exempted from the necessities of political life and the lessons of historical experience. The government of a democratic republic, like that of any other political form, must take care to secure its international independence as the precondition of its domestic liberties. To do this requires the raising of an army -- not just the

privates, sergeants, and junior officers who will maneuver on the battlefield, but also the generals who will see beyond the drill field to future and distant dangers. The necessity of a close connection in the formation of military policy, or strategy, between the civil and military authorities, our founders tell us, is not an ideological question. It is a necessity rooted in the nature of political life. "Publius" calls for an "all-encompassing" generalship because he understands clearly that a free state must also be a strong state.

We find a similar line of thought in this segment of *The Federalist* from the pen of James Madison, wherein "Publius" speaks not of the professional military in terms of isolation, fear, or disrespect, but, on the contrary, as a necessary factor in the lives of all nations:

Security against foreign danger is one of the primitive objects of civil society. It is an avowed and essential object of the American Union. The powers requisite for attaining it must be effectually confided to the federal councils. . . .

But was it necessary to give an indefinite power of raising troops, as well as providing fleets; and of maintaining both in PEACE, as well as in war?

. . . The answer indeed seems to be so obvious and conclusive as scarcely to justify a discussion in any place. . . .

How could a readiness for war in time of peace be safely prohibited, unless we could prohibit, in like manner, the preparations and establishments of every hostile nation? . . . If one nation maintains constantly a disciplined army, ready for the service of ambition or revenge, it obliges the most pacific nations who may be within reach of its enterprises to take corresponding precautions. . . . 7

If prudence be our guide, Madison, suggests, we will "take precautions" against military danger by a readiness for war in time of peace. The nature of that readiness is, by logical extension, the result of a confidence between civil authority and military judgment, and assumes the correlation of the two, since the military must be raised, provisioned, equipped, trained, and organized by the civil authority according to some dependable estimate of the danger at hand. In the very design of the force raised must lie the principles of its readiness to meet the danger as it presents itself. Since the nature of the danger can take "infinite" forms, a rational estimate of the forms it might take in the foreseeable future and the effort to design a force appropriate to meet that estimated danger is the essence of security policy. In short, it is the comprehension of the appropriate military means in light of the security needs of the state from the perspective of those who share in the responsibility for that security: the elected civil and the appointed military authorities. As Madison says, this is patently obvious -- virtually a tautology. It is, however, like the principle of equality, a self-evident truth which requires the constant protection of effective persuasion.

In its purest form, the debate between the Federalists and the Antifederalists was a dispute on the meaning of the American Revolution within the context of human history. Did the American regime constitute a true break with the past and did it promise a new definition of the human condition, or was it, rather, a salutary event within the context of the past and of an enduring human nature? This debate continues down to this day to mark the character of much of American political dispute, though not in a form which exhibits the clarity, the conviction, and the eloquence

of its earliest representations. It should not be surprising, therefore, to find contemporary spokesmen for the Antifederalist view of the military profession upholding the radical tradition of revolutionary America in a form perhaps much revised by experience, but true to its original sentiments. It could be counted a surprise, however, to find such views, or at least their current versions, being held among those for whom the issue ought to have been settled in May, 1790.

### Endnotes

1. Samuel B. Harding, "Objections to a Standing Army," in *The Antifederalist Papers*, edited by Morton Borden, Michigan State University Press, 1965, pp. 66-7.

2. \_\_\_\_\_, "Certain Powers for the Common Defense, Can and Should be Limited," in *The Antifederalist Papers*, p. 59.

3. John De Witt (pseudonym), "The Use of Coercion by the New Government," in *The Antifederalist Papers*, p. 75.

4. A Democratic Federalist (pseudonym), "Objections to National Control of the Militia," in *The Antifederalist Papers*, p. 78.

5. Alexander Hamilton, "The Federalist No. 23," in *The Federalist: A Commentary on the Constitution of the United States*. New York: The Modern Library, 1937, p. 142.

6. *Ibid.*, No. 25, p. 156.

7. James Madison, "The Federalist No. 41," in *The Federalist...*, p. 261.

## Chapter III

### The Ethic of Professional Isolatic.

In 1790, the last of the original thirteen states, Rhode Island, ratified the U. S. Constitution, and it truly became the law of the land. [The Constitution had been in effect since March, 1789.] Although the votes for ratification were closely split in some states, the majorities for ratification were decisive in their effect: the nation was committed to a political system predicated on Federalist principles. From those days to the present, the Federalist principle of a prudential and rational relationship between the art of war and the art of governance which unites their perspectives in what von Clausewitz dubbed "strategy" and what "Publius" called a "kind of policy," has been our true and original doctrine. Those who take an oath to uphold the Constitution might be expected to understand the relation between war and politics as did "Publius," yet many commonly speak otherwise, as though the great "heritage" of the American Republic was some latter-day version of the Antifederalist concept of military and political affairs. That this curious adoption of a notion which was born in hostility to the very law of the land is widespread among military officers is the inescapable consequence of my personal experience of their opinions and sentiments in the atmosphere of the USAWC curriculum. How had these officers come to adopt views contrary to those of our

founders, even if in some "watered down" form? How had they accepted an ethic contrary to the design of those who had made a professional, national Army possible?

The ratification of the Constitution might have effectually ended the dispute over standing armies and buried forever the antifederal ideology. Historical events -- most particularly the partisan rhetoric of antifederal politicians running under the banner of "States Rights" and the adaptation of that rhetoric to the support of the cause of secession and slavery in the 1850's -- have given an extended, if undistinguished, lineage to the views of those most hostile to the Constitution.

In each successive iteration, the views of the original Antifederalists have become less and less recognizable as their rhetoric was adapted to causes as various as the Nullificationism of Calhoun and the movement to repeal Prohibition; but the motivating spirit of the original cause was kept alive in a hundred other causes. The Antifederalist spirit also survived in the area of public discourse on the subject of civil-military relations. The evidential links to support this thesis need not be traced through their entire history; for the particular antifederal line of thought which is most germane to my concern has a very specific and relatively recent parentage. Walter Millis, a long-time and serious observer of U. S. military policy, had foreseen the need to change the American disposition toward war in the 1950's:

The basic problem confronting the nation in 1945 was not that of restoring a civilian control over the military establishment; it was the problem of integration -- of how military factors, military forces and military plans were

to be integrated with the civil diplomacy and civil domestic policy, of how their respective exponents were to learn to talk a common language to common ends.<sup>1</sup>

The linking of means and ends, of "military factors" and political objectives in their foreign and domestic settings would require an intellectual evolution that would open the fixed borders which tended to separate policy and tactics to bring them into consonance in strategy. This, Millis saw clearly, required that the military and civilian leaders learn something of one another's business in order to share a common perspective through a common vocabulary. It is this overlapping and shared responsibility for national security which von Clausewitz had in mind when he noted that it was not ". . . sensible to summon soldiers. . . and ask them for purely military advice. . ." <sup>2</sup> in high policy councils. As cautious a man as was General Dwight D. Eisenhower on the subject of civil military relations, he could not conceive how to do a general's work without engaging in "politics:"

There is no escaping the fact that when you take an area such as involved in all Western Europe and talk about its defense, you are right in the midst of political questions, financial questions, industrial as well as strictly military and you couldn't possibly divorce your commander from contact with them.<sup>3</sup>

The environment of the 1950's and 1960's was counted by the best informed observers of the time -- men like Millis and Morris Janowitz -- to be an ideal time in which to resolve the potential mismatch of military means and political ends. Still surrounded by the ready experience of a global war and given the context of nuclear deterrence and limited war, both of which required the suppression of the crusading temperament of republican "jealousy"

and the forging of a new collegiality between civil and military elites, the time seemed ripe for strategic thinking. Observed Janowitz, "... the sociopolitical character of deterrent military operations involves more explicit involvement by military personnel with political goals."<sup>4</sup>

The opportunity to realize more fully the objects of the national security reforms of the late 1940's, which aimed to insure a civil-military partnership in the making of strategy, was largely derailed, however, by the most salient development in the recent history of civil-military relations, the Truman-MacArthur "controversy." Raveled in party strife, ideological rhetoric, and the confusions inherent in the first tests of a new foreign policy paradigm, this watershed event has set the tone of all subsequent public discussions on civil-military relations in America. This is not the place to attempt a detailed analysis of this complex case; but to note a few of its consequences relevant to my present thesis will be necessary.

The focus of popular histories and commentaries of General Douglas MacArthur's dispute with President Harry S. Truman is the issue of *insubordination*. Insubordination means, in the narrow sense, a failure, driven by an unwillingness, to obey orders. According to John Spanier:

The fundamental issue posed by the Truman-MacArthur controversy... is whether the conduct of limited warfare is compatible with continuing civilian supremacy over the military.<sup>5</sup>

A view of broader perspective might have pointed to MacArthur's frustration in prosecuting a war which lacked a clear strategic context. It might have pointed to the mixed signals coming from the executive and legislative branches of the civil authority. In an even more comprehensive context, one might have seen in the Truman-MacArthur case the consequences of a failure to combine the military and civilian perspectives in a coordinated regional strategy. That effort could not be carried out in the midst of a war which had already taken a form of its own with an uncertain civil leadership and an isolated military commander. Because the issue was popularly interpreted in the much narrower context of civil supremacy, military insubordination, and the fear of Caesar, however, a different lesson was learned:

... The soldier... can win or lose a policy, but it is not for the soldier as a soldier to make the final decisions. . . . The military man executes [civilian] orders. This is his duty. He is, so to speak, a military "civil servant," a nonpartisan career officer who implements state policy. He may not openly question that policy while he is still in command. As a soldier he must obey his orders. . . . If he cannot accept the orders he has received, he must resign; *that is his responsibility as a moral being.*  
[emphasis added] 6

That the military is expected to obey the orders of its civilian government is a principle so natural to republicanism as to render it unquestioned in the company of supporters of that form of government. But was this the true lesson of the Truman-MacArthur confrontation? Does this formulation of that lesson give a true perspective of the responsibility of the military officer "... as a moral being?" The effect of this formulation is more than the

confirmation of Constitutional provisions. Indeed, it is the setting of an atmosphere for future civil-military relations, an atmosphere from the military perspective in which the careerism of civil service is conjoined with a code of silence in all matters construed as "partisan." It is an atmosphere devoid of the mutual respect essential to the formulation of strategy. It is an atmosphere of "a suspicion of the military and of military solutions to problems" which harkens back to Antifederalist ideology.

That such an atmosphere was created is proven by the ubiquity of the "civil supremacy - resignation" formula as the essence of civil-military relations in the years since the Truman-MacArthur dispute erupted on the national scene. Examples of its appearance may be drawn from a variety of sources and authorities. The widely respected expert on civil-military relations, Samuel P. Huntington, representing the mainstream interpretation of that subject within academia, asserted that:

... The essence of [the general's] art may indeed be defined as the relation between ... "the changeable fundamental conditions of good generalship in their relation to changeable tactical forms. . . ."

Politics deals with the goals of state policy. Competence in this field consists in having a broad awareness of the elements and interests entering into a [policy] decision and in possessing the legitimate authority to make such a decision. Politics is beyond the scope of military competence, and the participation of military officers in politics undermines their professionalism. . . . The military officer must remain neutral politically.<sup>7</sup>

Huntington does not hold these views lightly. Despite the general sense of approbation for the deeds of *Oberst* von Stauffenberg in the East Prussian headquarters of Adolf Hitler in

July, 1944, Huntington finds profound moral error in his conduct as well as that of a certain American military leader in one of the most curious comparisons in civil-military literature:

The commanding generals of the German Army in the late 1930's . . . almost unanimously believed that Hitler's policies would lead to national ruin. Military duty, however, required them to carry out his orders: some followed this course, others forsook the professional code to push their political goals. General MacArthur's opposition to the manner in which the government was conducting the Korean War was essentially similar [sic]. Both the German officers who joined the resistance to Hitler and General MacArthur forgot that it is not the function of military officers to decide questions of war and peace.<sup>8</sup>

It would be interesting, indeed, to dissect the ethics of so narrow a "professionalism" as Huntington prescribes that would ask the military officer to hold himself so aloof from "politics" as to attend the ruin of his nation in silence. It would also be interesting to compare this ethic with that applied by the International War Crimes Tribunal in Nuremberg which underscored the proposition that the military officer could not shed his moral being under the aegis of professionalism and obedience, but would stand answerable for the policies of his country. Notwithstanding these obvious ethical difficulties, the academic community has largely adopted the Huntington view as the orthodox paradigm of civil-military relations. In consequence, that view, or its many lesser versions, have had a significant effect on the educated of our nation -- including those officers acquired by the services through the ROTC programs. This has added the authority of intellectual respectability to a new form of the old Antifederalist notion that military influence in government is as dangerous to liberty as the threat of an overt military despotism.

Did this kind of thinking find support within the military itself? In the politically charged Congressional Hearings which followed General MacArthur's relief as CINCFE, an exchange between Senator Styles Bridges [R.--N.H.] and "the soldier's soldier," General Omar N. Bradley, then serving as the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, suggested sympathy with the principle of silence on policy matters:

**Bridges:** If it reaches a time in this country where you think the political decision is affecting what you believe to be right militarily, what would you do?

**Bradley:** Well, if after several instances in which the best military advice we could give was turned down for other reasons, I would decide that my advice was no longer of any help, why I would quit.

**Bridges:** Would you speak out, tell the American public?

**Bradley:** No sir . . . I am loyal to my country, but I am also loyal to the Constitution . . . and I wouldn't profess that my judgment was better than the President of the United States or the Administration.

**Bridges:** Would it not be on a military subject?

**Bradley:** Yes.

**Bridges:** Should you speak out?

**Bradley:** I would, yes, to the constituted authorities.

**Bridges:** But would you stop there?

**Bradley:** Yes.<sup>9</sup>

One may, and rightfully must concede that General Bradley was caught in a difficult position, speaking for the administration before a hostile political panel. Yet, his quandry itself proves the

unavoidability of the entry of the senior military leader into situations of a highly charged partisan nature in which he must choose sides, exercise moral and political choice, and make prudential judgments as a public man. The irony of his situation in professing an ethic of public silence while giving public testimony on a profoundly political question in which his answer would either confirm or deny the correctness of a profoundly political decision reveals an ethical hypocrisy which produces a tension between his words and his deeds. His *words*, however "politic" they might have been under the circumstances in which they were spoken -- leave the careful listener and reader uncertain of his meaning. For those less careful, however, his *words* teach and inform as the recorded testimonial of the unstained professional soldier and set a standard of their own. This standard contrasts powerfully in the minds of young officers with the standard and the fate of MacArthur. The authoritative approval of the former and the official ignominy of the latter are not lost on young men eager to emulate "success."

General Bradley had another opportunity to confront a challenge to the legitimacy of the Federalist vision of civil-military relations under the authority of the Constitution. This challenge emanated from the chair of no less a Constitutional authority than Supreme Court Associate Justice William O. Douglas, who wrote in a 1952 *Look* magazine article:

... The increasing influence of the military in our affairs is the most ominous aspect of our modern history. . . . Our government was designed to keep the military in the background, reserving them for the days of actual hostilities. . . . 10

One of the nine guardians of our Constitutional heritage, Justice Douglas' formulation of the military role, odd to say, is strongly reminiscent of the militia concept of the Antifederalists in its fearful attitude toward the peacetime establishment's "influence" and in its apparent call for the isolation of the military perspective. Douglas would hold the "dogs of war" on a short leash, permitting them no apparent part in ". . . foresee[ing] or defin[ing] the extent and variety of means. . ." of military success before war's onset. But Supreme Court Justices do not learn everything they know from a reading of the Constitution, or of *The Federalist*, and it is not surprising to find a reiteration of the dominant theme of MacArthur era views on civil-military relations -- even from this source. This exercise of the moral authority of the Court, however isolated from any actual findings this particular expression of opinion may have been, provide another authoritative source of ethical concepts for the profession of arms.

General Bradley was called upon to respond to these *obiter dicta* of Justice Douglas, to defend the military establishment. Although the U. S. military had recently saved the West from what Churchill called "the long night of barbarism," and had heeded the call of the people and the government to accept extraordinary responsibility for the survival of the nation, it now found itself confronted with the "tradition of antimilitarism." General Bradley, a key player in the honored achievements of the U. S. military, could find not even a thin defense of the military, but responded in words bordering on apology:

Economically, politically, and militarily, the control of our country resides with the civilian executive and legislative agencies. . . when you have civilians like these in charge

no military clique can develop. And when you have trained and skilled businessmen and scientists advising the military as frequently as we have had since 1940, admirals and generals are not likely to influence unduly the policy and plans of our Government. . . I am also sure that as soon as civilian agencies are organized to take over such civilian problems, the military will gladly withdraw to its purely professional duties.!!

Once again we acknowledge that General Bradley's response was restricted by the prudential aspects of his difficult circumstance, but even that restriction did not forbid the development of a position which would lay out a truer formulation of the justifiable and even necessary relations between the civil and military authorities. Could Bradley have taken this opportunity to provide a temperate, but firm defense of the Constitutional role of the military as a reader of the Federalist ought to have understood it? One may conclude that in the wake of the Truman-MacArthur controversy, Bradley could not find a ground on which to justify, simultaneously, the relief of General MacArthur and the involvement of the military perspective in political questions. If he knew of such a ground and failed to employ it for prudential reasons, his prudence now seems ill-placed; for his example has continued to inform a long line of military officers -- and civil leaders -- which has extended well beyond the temporal confines of the Truman administration. That example is not one of *real* isolation from political matters, but the example of an inexplicable divergence of doctrine and practice, of saying one thing and doing another, of being deeply involved in "political questions," but embarrassedly claiming that such involvement is either a temporary aberration or the consequence of insubordination. General Eisenhower understood otherwise.

## Endnotes

1. Walter Millis, *Arms and the State: Civil-Military Elements in National Policy*, Baltimore: The Lord Baltimore Press, 1958, p. 142.
2. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War*, edited and translated by Michael Howard and Peter Paret. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1976, p. 607.
3. Dwight D. Eisenhower, quoted in Millis, p. 348.
4. Morris Janowitz, "Civic Consciousness and Military Performance" in *The Political Education of Soldiers*, edited by M.J. and Stephen D. Westbrook, Beverly Hills, California: Sage Publishers, 1983, p. 71.
5. John W. Spanier, *The Truman-MacArthur Controversy and the Korean War*, New York: The Norton Library, 1965, p. 8.
6. *Ibid.*, p. 13.
7. Samuel P. Huntington, *The Soldier and the State*, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1957, p. 71.
8. *Ibid.*, p. 77.
9. Senate Hearings, quoted in Millis, p. 328
10. William O. Douglas, quoted in Millis, p. 361
11. Omar N. Bradley, quoted in Millis, p. 362.

## Chapter IV

### The Partisan Exclusion

The disparity between doctrine and practice was strongly tested in the Kennedy administration. The young President came to office with an expansive concept of foreign policy -- a vision which from the outset required an unprecedented peacetime cooperation between the civilian and military authorities in the formulation of military plans to implement a political vision. In its first year in office, however, the new administration was called upon to deal with the case of Major General Edwin Walker. Walker was a U. S. Army division commander in Europe who had designed an overzealous program of political education which had both legitimate and illegitimate dimensions. The scandal which arose around the Walker case led to hearings in the U. S. Senate which intended to separate the legitimate from the illegitimate and to consider legislation to quell what seems, in retrospect, to have been undue fears about the import and extent of political indoctrination in the Army. Once again, an opportunity had arisen to present a cohesive sense of the *legitimate* role of the military in political affairs, and once again the issue was misconstrued and the result was, therefore, misleading.

This exchange between Senator Margaret Chase Smith [R--Maine] and Defense Secretary Robert S. McNamara during those hearings presents a novel distinction, but sustains an old opinion:

**Smith.** . . . As I understand it, the basis of the restrictions [against military men speaking in public against government policies] is to bar the military from politics, and to prevent the military from getting into politics.

Would it not then only be consistent to bar politics in the military, to prohibit such politics in the military such as generals being selected on the basis of politics?

**McNamara.** If I may, in passing, suggest that when we use the word "politics" or "political" and we may have done it erroneously, we have tried to use it synonymously [*sic*] with "partisan politics." Its dictionary definition is not quite that, but that is the way we use it, and using it in sense I believe we should prohibit military officers from participating in partisan politics, and we should prohibit partisan politics from affecting the promotion of an officer.<sup>1</sup>

The response of the Secretary of Defense makes a curious distinction between politics and *partisan* politics, as though there could be some kind of "nonpartisan" politics. If we accept the view held by every respectable student of political affairs that politics is inherently engaged in matters of opinion, and if we believe that it is around opinion that faction is formed, then we must also deny that such a thing as nonpartisan politics could exist. That being the case, we would be at a loss to comprehend the distinction between participating in politics and participating in partisan politics. The prohibition against the latter is also a prohibition against the former.

If we take the meaning of the Secretary to be that military officers should not take positions which coincide with those of political parties, or of members or spokesmen for political parties, we run into a similar difficulty, since parties, their members, and

their spokesmen will likely have covered the field of opinion in matters of national security as well as most other fields. To avoid the expression of an opinion with partisan connections or aspects, therefore, would be nearly impossible. Consulted on even the most apparently technical question of military tactics, budget, and equipment, the military leader may find himself squarely in the middle of raging political controversy. To play an effective role in recommending prudent "precautions" in the formation of national strategy, how much more must the military officer be exposed to and be required to engage in controversial matters of partisan interest. How likely that he will find himself with passionate friends and passionate opponents among the spokesmen for parties, factions, interests, and lobbies if he deigns to give advice which his whole professional training and experience have fitted him to give?

To require that the military leader refrain from participating in "partisan" controversy in some absolute sense is to require either that the military profession be trivialized so that it is incapable of contributing to policy formation where controversy is rampant and his advice is most needed, or to force military leaders to find alternative, and usually clandestine, means to mold and influence policy. The former alternative endangers the safety of the nation, while the latter corrupts the military profession and the political processes of a democratic society. Both alternatives rob the people of the opportunity to form their judgments on matters of national security with the benefit of hearing the views of those military leaders into whose hands will pass the life of the nation when war is at hand.

Secretary McNamara had given further verification of his attachment to the Antifederalist view of civil-military relations in his opening statement to the Senate panel in the Walker hearings:

There is one element of this program which I consider of vital importance, and it is that we protect the integrity of our military program by abstaining meticulously from partisan politics in any form and from attempting to make national policy. That is not the role of the Defense Department and, under our constitutional system, it never has been.

We believe that the Military Establishment is an instrument, not a shaper of national policy. Its members, as free Americans, are entitled to their view on the issues of the day, and they have every right to try to make their views effective through the ballot. They do not have the right, however, to use the Military Establishment to advance partisan concepts or to alter the decisions of the elected representatives of the people.<sup>2</sup>

McNamara makes clear that the proscription against "partisan politics" means a proscription against making or "shaping" policy and that this proscription extends to the Department of Defense -- an odd formulation for a key member of the Cabinet who was about to enter onto the stage of history as one of the architects of the Vietnam War. He also ties his proscription to a danger: the advancement of "partisan concepts" inherent in the shaping of national policy is linked to the "alteration" of the decisions of the nation's elected representatives. This is nothing more than the old bugaboo of military usurpation not by violent overthrow, but by commandeering the functions of government through "influence." Even if we allow for the political pressures on the Secretary in attempting to reassure the Congress, the press, and ultimately the people that the Department of Defense was in effective control of its

flag officers, this "defense" goes too far, gives away too much, and ultimately plants a greater mistrust in the public mind than a dozen Walkers could manage to do. Worse, it provides yet another authoritative source within the military community which serves to alienate the officer corps from its proper role in giving professional depth to national security policy.

Responding to the McNamara testimony, an old soldier who had crossed and recrossed the vague line which separates the warrior and the statesman, General Eisenhower wrote a letter to Senator John Stennis in which he provided the committee with a profound guidepost for their deliberations. His letter goes further, however, because McNamara's testimony had gone further, than the hearings themselves might have required. In the process, Eisenhower provided a revival of the common sense views of the Federalists on the subject of civil-military relations:

First, I mention in passing that I endorse without qualification the doctrine of military subordination to civil authority. The armed services are not policy-making bodies. Their function is faithfully to execute the policy decisions of the properly constituted agencies of civil government. It is equally true, however, that in this modern day, the need of civil government for the counsel and advice of military personnel in the devising of policies grows more acute.<sup>3</sup>

Eisenhower here makes a crucial distinction. The services, he says, are not policy-making *bodies*. They are not senates, or congresses, or cabinets. They do not have the authority, under the Constitution, to make or adjudicate laws under normal circumstances. The services are not forums for the debate of public issues. They must, however, give "advice" and "counsel" to such

bodies because such advice and counsel is acutely necessary. The need for such advice could only be acute if the military perspective had some particular contribution to make to the formulation of policy. To provide such advice and counsel in public forums of policy deliberation and debate would require that military leaders be capable of articulating the military perspective in a civilian environment of controversy and dispute. Eisenhower is clear on this aspect of the problem of the military contribution to policy:

I subscribe also to the position expressed to your subcommittee last fall by the Secretary of Defense [McNamara], that military involvement in the providing of information concerning Communist potential aggression -- indeed its involvement in all matters -- must be clearly nonpartisan, directed to subjects related to the defense of America, and in harmony with approved national policies.

This is, of course, easily said. But difficulties are inescapable, when one attempts to decide what type of statement or gathering is partisan and what isn't -- what, conceivably, in these times is unrelated to the Nation's strength and safety -- and what, precisely, national policy really is. Such determinations are necessarily, in good measure, subjective. I suspect that many active duty personnel could conclude from such broad guidelines that virtually any utterance before a non-military group might be construed as a violation of instructions of higher authority; hence, the course of prudence would be to say nothing at all.<sup>4</sup>

Eisenhower provides a lesson in the nature of government and a warning for the future -- a warning of even greater danger to the life of the nation than his more often quoted concerns about the growth of a "military-industrial complex." Eisenhower reminds us that a policy which places prior restraints on speech on the ground of abstract principle is a policy likely to produce difficulties

of interpretation so extensive and requiring judgment so critical in a punitive atmosphere as to produce an undesirable consequence: *silence*. It is abstractly true that the military is to be nonpartisan, i. e., it is neither a Republican nor a Democratic party affiliate. If it has a partisan perspective at all, it is one born of its national and Constitutional perspective and dedication.

This notion extends not only to the giving of speeches on the Communist threat, as in the Walker case, but to military involvement in *all* matters. Real policy is forged in debate and in public speech before nonmilitary bodies in the executive branch, in the halls of Congress, and even in meetings of the local Kiwanis Club. The military officer must be free to speak for that policy which, from his perspective, enhances national security. Although he must apply the prudential judgment exercised by any professional as to the propriety of his words in the hearing of the particular audience he addresses, he must be able to speak without fear of reprisal for giving his honest assessment, trusting to the care of the good sense of cabinet member, congressman, and citizen alike the capacity for judgment and evaluation. In fact, it is the freedom of the military officer to *speak* his professional mind on matters of national security that insures his nonpartisan status in the narrow sense; for only when he is free to stand aloof from the temporary pressures of highly charged political situations and speak from a national and professional perspective without fear of reprisal by the politicians who hold the reins of office or by the politicians who may hold them in the future that the military officer can fulfill his Constitutional obligation as "Publius" would understand it. It is in this sense that an excessive demand for conformity with the announced positions of any administration, or

party, or faction converts the military officer into either a glib mouthpiece for a truly partisan view, or forces his silence. It is in this way that the partisan exclusion may rob the public of the advice of those who are the "protectors of the state."

If my intuitional reaction to the mood of the USAWC Class of 1988 and the curious support for that mood in the spirit of the words of many visiting high-ranking officers is well founded, then I would be forced to say that the Antifederalist paradigm of civil-military relations, as taught by its recent progenitors, remains as great a danger to the safety of the Republic as ever. It is Huntington, Bradley, Douglas, and McNamara whose influence dominates, while the reasoned words of Eisenhower remain little known and unheeded. The danger of the Antifederalist paradigm lies in its breaking of the bonds between the people and their military guardians by teaching both the citizen and the soldier a fallacious ethic of antimilitarism which is, in truth, an ethic of irrationality and anarchy. The moral defect of this latter day iteration of Antifederalist civil-military concepts becomes evident in the unfortunate speech of a grand old soldier, General Bradley, whose only recourse when faced with the terrible consequences of carrying out an erroneous military policy he concludes to be to keep public silence and to resign to a short-lived controversy and a long-lived private ignominy; to smile and make excuses or fabrications against his instincts and experience, or to absent himself from his oath-bound commitment to the security of his nation.

A recent speaker at the USAWC, an officer who had achieved the most significant political-military positions open to any U. S.

military officer, advised differently [I paraphrase]: "Stay in as long as you can and make your voice heard," he suggested, "for once you are out, you will play no role in the making of decisions." This seems to me to be a firmer professional ethic than the model of "comply or quit." It is an ethic which recognizes the true nature of the Constitutional role of the military officer as an indispensable factor in the security of the nation and which requires the officer to understand the professional risks which are inherent in the great public trust placed in him in a world of extreme danger and unending controversy. General Eisenhower, writing to Senator Stennis and his committee from Gettysburg, where he was enjoying a well deserved retirement after eight years as President of the United States, , presented the case starkly:

I need not remind your committee, especially, that in these times military considerations and economic, political, and ideological considerations are interrelated to such a degree as to make an arbitrary dividing line between the military and the nonmilitary increasingly unrealistic. . . . 5

I believe, therefore, that your committee will render valuable service by rejecting the recent spate of attacks upon the competence and loyalty of the military and by disapproving any effort to thrust them, so to speak, behind an American iron curtain, ordered to stand mutely by as hostile forces tirelessly strive to undermine every aspect of American life.<sup>6</sup>

### Endnotes

1. U. S. Congress. Senate. *Defense Secretary McNamara on Senate Resolution 191: Hearings before the Committee On Armed Services*. Washington, D. C. : U. S. Government Printing Office, 1961. p. 16.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

3. U. S. Congress. Senate. *Hearings before the Special Preparedness Subcommittee on Armed Services, 87th Congress.* Washington D. C. : U. S. Government Printing Office, 1962, p. 5.

4. *Ibid.*

5. *Ibid.*, p. 6.

6. *Ibid.*, p. 7.

## Chapter V

### An Education for Relevance

The most remarkable book I have yet encountered on the Vietnam War, Colonel Harry G. Summers' *On Strategy*, opens with what must surely be regarded as one of the most searing and yet revealing retorts ever evoked. The setting was the truce negotiation in Hanoi in April, 1975:

"You know you never defeated us on the battlefield," said the American colonel.

The North Vietnamese colonel pondered this remark a moment. "That may be so," he replied, "but is is also irrelevant."<sup>1</sup>

It is fortunate, indeed, for the American people that Colonel Summers was not satisfied to leave this apparent riddle unsolved; for within its ironic and barb-like exterior may be found a gift from one warrior to another -- the very special gift of sage insight. Nor was this gift wasted. Colonel Summers' published reflections on its true meaning have given rise to a singular opportunity to open for public airing assumptions and fallacies on the use of military force as an element of national policy. These writings have been a factor, no doubt, in the design of the USAWC curricular theme.

The key to comprehension of how so mighty a force as the U. S. Army could be "irrelevant" in war, Summers concludes, is found in the failure of those responsible for U. S. defense policy to understand the connection between national objectives and military means, and between domestic political opinion and foreign policy. In short, American "irrelevance" in Vietnam was based on a failure to understand the connection between war and politics. Summers bids us turn our attention to the issues of grand strategy-- particularly as seen through the eyes of Carl von Clausewitz:

By analyzing the Vietnam War against a source [von Clausewitz] untainted by today's bias, we should arrive at a better understanding of the deficiencies in military theory that led to our problems there, and the changes necessary for the future. . . 2

But is the problem of strategy solely one of "military theory?" Can we, by reference to von Clausewitz alone, resolve our difficulties? Is our "irrelevance" primarily a theoretical problem which may be dissected in the bias-free atmosphere of abstract logic? The evidence suggests otherwise. The problem is somewhat more complicated than a matter of theoretical error, or doctrinal ignorance; for the predilection to disconnect the military perspective from policy making and the "partisan" subjects of domestic opinion and foreign policy lies in a "tradition" which judges that disconnection to be a positive good, the hallmark of a successful political order and military ethic. As long as that tradition is the source of moral reference on the subject of civil-military relations, no amount of theoretical inquiry on the subject of strategy, no matter how ingenious, can succeed, save by the inculcation of professional "immorality." Unless the officer corps comes to accept fully the ethic of the old Federalist view as an American-grown

original, the call to study von Clausewitz will require the hypocritical stance of a profession which acts one way, but espouses an ethic which requires them to act another way. Indeed, the introduction of von Clausewitz, a military mercenary of the despots of Europe, might appear, in light of the dominant tradition of anti-militarism, to be a seditious act.

The first step in the political education of the officer corps must be to demonstrate that the study of von Clausewitz and the political perspective of war is a fit subject for U. S. Army officers. As has been suggested above, I believe such a demonstration can be made. Contrary to Colonel Summers' desire to bypass "today's bias," I contend that that bias, which I have herein identified as the Antifederalist ideology of our founding period in a variety of hybrid forms, must be squarely faced and refuted. We must educate a new generation of officers to a truer picture of the Constitutional duties and obligations which arise out of their genuine heritage and so set the tone of a more practical and, indeed, more honorable professional ethic.

The well-conceived military education will revive the Constitutional heritage of the officer corps and provide the moral ground for the taking of an interest in the teachings of a 19th century Prussian officer and in the study of the whole body of political-military literature which is the best school of the strategic mind. This principle should be observed in any new conception of the USAWC curriculum which may be proposed and an appropriate block of instruction designed. The place for such a block of instruction is during the initial course segment on Senior Military Leadership; for the very concept of such leadership is predicated on

the unhesitating acceptance of the ethic of America's great tradition of military statesmanship.

Only in consequence of a correct ethical understanding of civil-military relations can the officer corps embrace the educational objectives of the USAWC. As von Clausewitz well understood, an education for strategic relevance requires a total intellectual commitment grounded in a temperament cool under stress. Such a total commitment is not consistent with the bad conscience of authoritative, yet contradictory, moral imperatives and the unwitting adoption of enthusiastic ideologies which contain the seeds of "absolute war." Von Clausewitz may unknowingly have been describing the warrior-statesman envisioned earlier by "Publius" and, as well, the ideal graduate of the USAWC when he observed:

A commander-in-chief need not be a learned historian, or a pundit, but he must be familiar with the higher affairs of state and its innate policies; he must know current issues, questions under consideration, the leading personalities, and be able to form sound judgments. . . . The knowledge needed by a senior commander is distinguished by the fact that it can only be attained by a special talent, through the medium of reflection, study and thought; an intellectual instinct which extracts the essence from the phenomena of life, as a bee sucks honey from a flower. In addition to study and reflection, life itself serves as a source. . . .

Knowledge must be so absorbed into the mind that it almost ceases to exist in a separate, objective way. . . . [In war] continual change compels the commander to carry the whole intellectual apparatus of his knowledge with him. . . . By total assimilation with his mind and life, the commander's knowledge must be transformed into genuine capability. . . . 3

A political education, by which I mean an education in all those matters concerning human events on which may turn the safety and success of our nation, is the indispensable preparation for strategic relevance. Strategic relevance is the true standard of military professionalism at the level of senior leadership. It is also the just expectation of the American people of the uniformed guardians of their liberties and independence. Let us, therefore, with a clear conscience and a manly sense of duty follow proudly the ancient profession of arms. Let us return to that tradition in which we honor the names of Jackson, Grant, Pershing, MacArthur, Marshall, Eisenhower and others who have bequeathed a heritage of all-encompassing leadership. Let us rediscover our true heritage in the words of our nation's first and greatest warrior-statesman, General George Washington:

If we are to pursue a right system of policy, in my opinion, there should be none of these [divisive] distinctions. We should all be considered, Congress, Army, etc. as *one* people, embarked in *one* cause, in *one* interest; acting on the same principle and to the same end.<sup>4</sup>

### Endnotes

1. Harry G. Summers, *On Strategy: The Vietnam War in Context*, Carlisle Barracks, Pennsylvania: Strategic Studies Institute, U. S. Army War College, 1981, p. 1.

2. *Ibid.*, p. 4.

3. Carl von Clausewitz, *On War* . . . , pp. 146-7.

4. George Washington, Letter to John Bannister, April 21, 1778, Valley Forge, in *The Writings of George Washington*, edited by John C. Fitzpatrick. Washington, D. C. : Government Printing Office, 1931-44.

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